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The President's Daily Brief

1 May 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, the situation at Quang Tri City is critical, and Communist pressure is increasing in the central highlands and in areas north of Saigon. *(Page 1)*

Chinese news media have denounced the President's speech of 26 April, but still appear relatively unalarmed over the Indochina situation. *(Page 2)*

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Photography confirms the arrival of a Soviet G-class ballistic missile submarine in Cuba on Saturday. *(Page 4)*

The joint communiqué following Egyptian President Sadat's trip to Moscow reflects Arab frustrations over the impasse with Israel. *(Page 5)*

The preliminary Indo-Pakistani talks apparently made at least some progress toward resolving issues arising from the December war. *(Page 6)*

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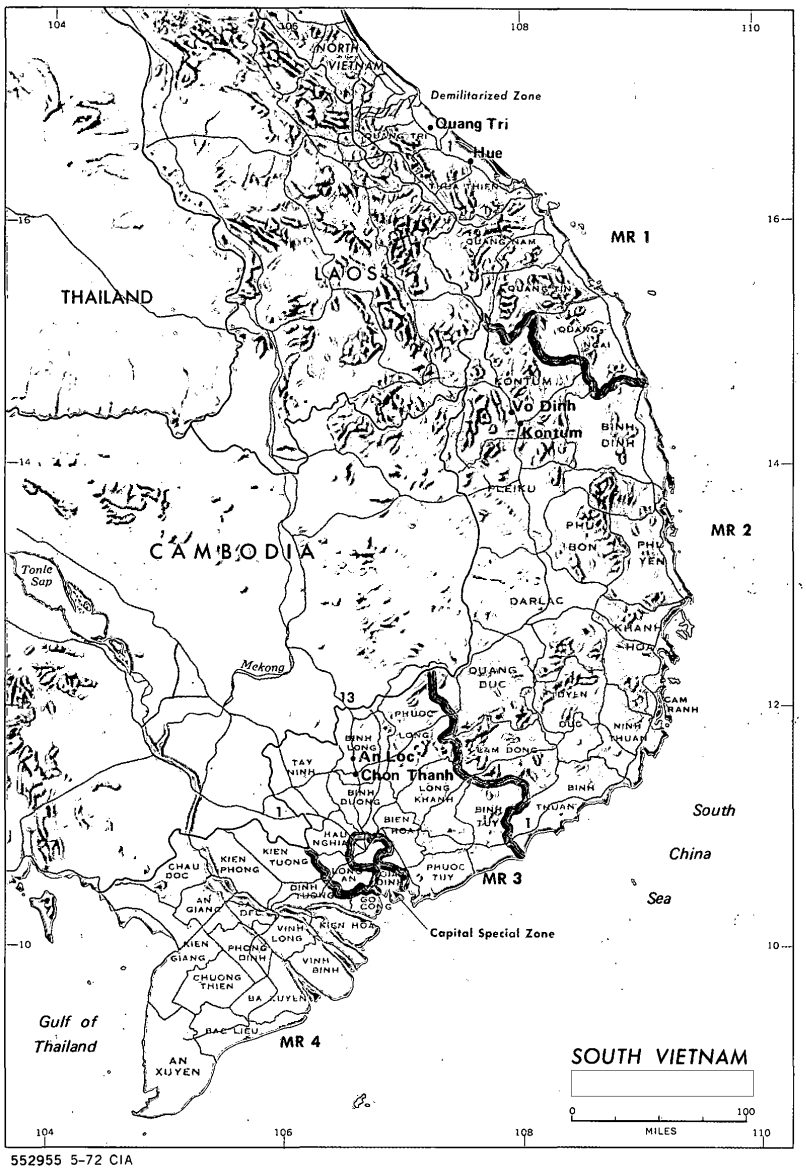

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The situation at Quang Tri City worsened over the weekend, and reports this morning indicate that government defenses are collapsing. A North Vietnamese force of up to eight regiments, supported by artillery and armor, surrounds the provincial capital and the city has been under artillery and rocket fire. Shelling has destroyed a large government ammunition depot inside the town, and a truck convoy attempting to bring in ammunition over Route 1 from the south was ambushed. Flying weather remains good, but intense Communist groundfire has made it difficult to resupply the city's defenders by air.

At least some of the North Vietnamese forces in Quang Tri Province appear to be bypassing the provincial capital and heading south toward Hue. A headquarters element of the 304th Division has been detected in a recent movement into Thua Thien Province.

At least some combat units of the 304th presumably will follow the headquarters element. It is not likely, however, that the Communists will make a major shift in their forces without first capturing Quang Tri City.

In the central highlands, at least two regiments of the North Vietnamese 320th Division have skirted the government's new defense line near Vo Dinh and are now within easy striking distance of Kontum City. Apparently as a result, the South Vietnamese are abandoning this line and pulling back closer to Kontum City. The airfield on the city's outskirts has come under shelling and a strong assault on the provincial capital is expected soon.

To the north of Saigon, Communist forces continue to shell An Loc and to hamper the South Vietnamese relief column pushing north from Chon Thanh, but fighting in the area is declining. Taking advantage of the fact that government troops are still pinned down around An Loc, enemy units are increasing their activity in adjacent areas. They conducted several ground probes during the weekend in Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the Communist [redacted] divisions have been detected moving from Binh Long into Binh Duong and Phuoc Long provinces, and enemy infantry units and tank columns have been observed crossing the border from Cambodia on Route 13 and Route 1. 25X1

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CHINA-US

On Saturday, the New China News Agency carried an account of President Nixon's speech of 26 April, and yesterday People's Daily ran a "commentator" article on the subject. Although relatively moderate in tone, the two items nevertheless contain the most extensive direct attacks on the President since the current North Vietnamese offensive began. Both accuse the President of "blatantly" claiming that the fighting in South Vietnam is the result of a massive North Vietnamese invasion. Nevertheless, People's Daily, while declaring that such claims are "slander," and that continued bombing of the North indicates Washington has "broken its promise" to end the war, carefully attributes these particular sins to the "US Government" rather than the President himself.

Unless the Chinese wished to ignore the President's speech entirely, they could hardly refer to it without such attacks on it. The lack of extreme vituperation in both articles, as well as the delay in commenting on the speech at all, suggest that Peking has taken pains to couch its criticism in relatively noninflammatory terms. In other respects the two items contain standard Chinese rhetoric on the war, reiterating their support for the Vietnamese people and familiar Communist formulations for ending the war.

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WEST GERMANY

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USSR-CUBA

A Soviet diesel-powered ballistic missile submarine arrived in Cuba's Nipe Bay shortly after daylight on 29 April. Photography [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] confirms that the submarine 25X1
is a G-II class, which can carry three 700-nm SS-N-5 missiles. This marks the first visit by a Soviet ballistic missile submarine to a port outside the USSR.

The G-II was escorted into Nipe Bay by the Kotlin-class destroyer that has been in Cuban waters since 5 March along with an F-class diesel-powered torpedo attack submarine that is currently in the port of Mariel. The G-II and the Kotlin joined the Ugra-class submarine tender that arrived in Nipe Bay on 28 April after a direct transit from the Black Sea.

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EGYPT-USSR

The joint communiqué issued after President Sadat ended a two-day visit to Moscow clearly reflects Egyptian frustration over the lack of progress toward resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. It reiterates the support of the two parties for the UN resolution of 1967 on the Middle East, and asserts further that, if a political solution continues to be thwarted, the Arab states "have every reason to use other means" to regain the occupied territory. Unlike the communiqué issued after Sadat's visit to Moscow last February, this one does not bring up the Jarring mission.

The joint statement does not specify any new Soviet military commitments to Egypt, reporting merely that there were discussions aimed at "further increasing" Egypt's military potential and "strengthening the military cooperation" between the two. The defensive nature of the military aid provided by Moscow is not stressed as it was in the previous communiqué.

Even without specific new commitments, Sadat's visit may help to reassure Egyptians that the gravity of the Middle East situation will be fully recognized during the coming US-Soviet discussions. For those Egyptians who regard political efforts as futile, the communiqué also holds out the prospect that eventual resort to a military solution is not being entirely ruled out.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

The four-day preliminary discussions between Indian and Pakistani representatives that were concluded on Saturday apparently made some progress toward resolving the issues arising from the December war. Their joint statement, released after the talks, announced plans for a meeting in New Delhi between Prime Minister Gandhi and President Bhutto in late May or early June. The representatives agreed on an agenda for the summit which [redacted] includes the issues of troop disengagement and prisoner exchanges.

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Pakistani Foreign Office spokesmen have stated publicly that Islamabad would not object if Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman joined the summit talks.

> *The Pakistanis may hope that a constructive atmosphere at the conference will encourage Dacca to drop its plans to try Pakistani prisoners as war criminals in Bangladesh. Dacca has yet to show any willingness to back down on this issue and has insisted that Pakistani recognition must precede a Bengali-Pakistani summit.*

Before leaving Pakistan, India's principal negotiator, D. P. Dhar, held a private session with Bhutto. Bhutto later described the encounter to Ambassador Farland as "frank and open" and, although complaining about India's "patronizing attitude," said he was hopeful that negotiations would be fruitful. Bhutto is under few illusions about his power position vis-a-vis the Indians, "who hold all the cards" and who, he charged, were conducting "subversive activities" in the troubled Pakistani provinces of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier. Nevertheless, he hopes that he can delay consideration of Kashmir--"the major bilateral problem"--until such issues as the restoration of diplomatic relations have been resolved.

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NOTES

Laos: Government forces regained control of Skyline Ridge overlooking Long Tieng on 29 April. About 100 irregulars with air support cleared the two positions that had remained in enemy hands at the center of the ridge. North Vietnamese opposition was relatively light, strengthening indications in recent intercepts that the Communists are withdrawing some of their forces from the area in preparation for the coming rainy season. The situation elsewhere in Laos remains relatively quiet.

Turkey: Prime minister - designate Suat Hayri Urgupulu appears confident that he can put together an acceptable government within a day or two. A political independent who served as prime minister for nine months in 1965, Urgupulu plans an "above parties" cabinet chosen from the four principal parties represented in parliament. Although Urgupulu complained in 1970 of US pressure on Turkey to restrict opium poppy cultivation, he has since been silent on this issue and has been generally friendly toward the US.

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